THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Minutes of Meeting held July 24, 1974

A special meeting was held on July 24, 1974, at 12 o'clock noon, at The Church House, 16th Floor, 1700 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Present were Bishop Ogilby, The Rev. Messrs. Logan, Musselman and Van Der Hiel, Mrs. Sellers, Messrs. Putnam Schreiner and Simons, and the Chancellor, William White, Esquire. Regrets were received from The Rev. Messrs. Harding and Long and Mr. Ballam, all of whom were out of town.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Bishop Ogilby and The Rev. Mr. Musselman.

The Rev. Mr. Van Der Hiel presided. He stated that the meeting had been called by the Bishop to consider a question raised as to the proposed ordination of certain women. The Bishop expressed appreciation of the unanimous attendance of the Standing Committee members in the area, including some who had returned from vacation for the meeting. The Secretary reported telephone conversations with The Rev. Dr. Harding and Mr. Ballam indicating support for the position in this matter which the Bishop has taken and willingness to support such further action as the Committee might agree upon.

Bishop Ogilby referred to his statement circulated the preceding week and noted that he felt it essential to circulate it immediately. He stated that he had not given approval or consent to a proposed ordination of women to the Priesthood.

Mr. Van Der Hiel asked the Chancellor whether such service of Ordination could be held without consent or approval of the Diocesan. The Chancellor said that in his opinion such service could be held and could not be stopped but that it would be irregular.

It was pointed out that the Rev. Suzanne R. Hiatt had not been certified by the Standing Committee and that the Bishop had not approved her for Ordination to the Priesthood.

Extended discussion ensued. The Secretary's letter of May 23, 1974 to Ms. Hiatt was read. A letter from the Rev. Paul M. Washington to Bishop Ogilby dated July 8, 1974 was also considered. The Chancellor stated that there is no express prohibition in the Constitution or Canons against the ordination of women to the Priesthood but that in the last three General Conventions the governing body of the National Church has debated the propriety of such ordination of women and has not yet approved such policy. He pointed out that the Church has not accepted the policy of ordination of women to the Priesthood.

Bishop Ogilby summarized the distress expressed by Bishops, other clergy and lay persons at the proposed action. He pointed out that many persons expressing distress supported the cause of ordination of women to the Priesthood and that cause could be hurt by the proposed ordination.

The Chancellor referred to Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution of the National Church and noted that neither the Bishop of the Diocese nor the House of Bishops nor the Presiding Bishop had authorized any Bishop to participate in the proposed Ordination.

Discussion indicated unanimous opinion that the proposed Ordination should not occur as reported to be planned.

The consensus was that if the proposed Ordination were indefinitely postponed the Standing Committee would recommend to the Bishop and to the Diocesan Council that at its next meeting it memorialize the House of Bishops to call a special General Convention

to consider favorably Ordination of women to the Priesthood at the earliest opportunity. The Bishop, Mrs. Sellers and Messrs. Van Der Hiel and Simons were requested to discuss this with Bishop DeWitt and anyone else they deemed appropriate. Bishop Ogilby endorsed this procedure and indicated willingness to initiate discussion in the House of Bishops. On motion, Mrs. Sellers and Messrs. Van Der Hiel and Simons were appointed a sub-committee of the Standing Committee to implement this discussion.

It was again noted that Ms. Hiatt had not been recommended for ordination to the Priesthood by the Standing Committee in accordance with National Canon 11 nor had the Bishop authorized such ordination.

A communication from the Bishop of Virginia was considered indicating that he would not recognize any priestly function of a woman candidate until her status was clarified and if she failed voluntarily to accept such action he would suspend her until the next meeting of the House of Bishops. Bishop Ogilby indicated that he would take similar action if Ms. Hiatt were ordained. On motion adopted without dissent, the Standing Committee approved such proposed action by the Bishop.

Possible civil action to prohibit the proposed ordination by injunction was discussed. Such action was deemed inadvisable because this is a matter for the Church.

A form of message from the Bishop was agreed upon to be sent to participating Bishops with copy to Ms. Hiatt and possibly to others in the event that the Ordination was not voluntarily postponed indefinitely, which communication is to be attached to and incorporated in these minutes if it need be used.

The Bishop and sub-committee then made an appointment with Bishop DeWitt for 8 A.M. the next day. The Bishop stated that he would discuss the situation further with Bishop Allin.

On motion adopted without dissent, the Committee recorded its support of the position taken in the Bishop's letter to the Diocese and his proposed action to be taken as discussed at this meeting by the Bishop.

Release of an official statement was postponed until after the meeting with Bishop DeWitt.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Alfred W. Putnam
Secretary